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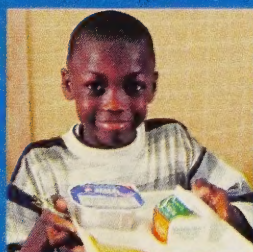
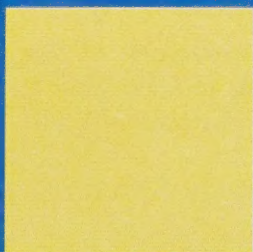
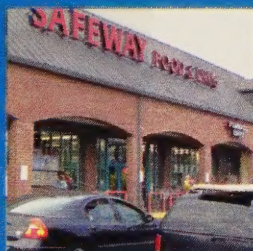
# Food Security Research at ERS

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**Food Assistance & Nutrition  
Research Program**

*Economic Research for a Healthy,  
Well-Nourished America*



ERS leads Federal research in food security, food insecurity, and hunger in U.S. households and communities. This research facilitates informed public debate regarding food security, its impact on the well-being of children, adults, families, and communities, and its relationship to public policies, public assistance programs, and the economy. ERS also provides information and data to social science analysts to facilitate their research on food security and food security measurement in U.S. households and communities. ERS supports data collection, conducts research, and funds studies by universities and private research organizations to further understanding of these issues.

## **Household Food Security Statistical and Technical Reports**

### ***Household Food Security in the United States, Annual Reports (ERR-11, FANRR-42, FANRR-35, FANRR-29, FANRR-21)***

This series of reports, published annually since 1999, provides statistics from the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) on the food security of U.S. households, how much they spend on food, and the extent to which food-insecure households receive Federal and community food assistance. Food security statistics are provided for major demographic groups and for States.

### ***Household Food Security in the United States, 1998 and 1999: Statistical and Technical Reports (E-FAN-02-010, E-FAN-02-011)***

These reports provide estimates of the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger in U.S. households in 1998 and 1999 and explore key technical issues related to the CPS-FSS.

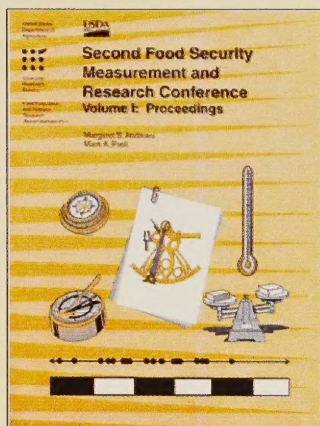
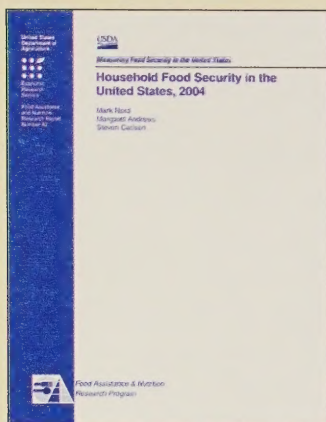
### ***A 30-Day Food Security Scale for CPS-FSS Data (E-FAN-02-015)***

This report specifies procedures for calculating the revised 30-day scale and classifying households as to 30-day food security status. It also compares prevalence rates of food insecurity with hunger based on the 30-day scale with those based on the 12-month scale for the years 1998-2000.

### ***Measuring Children's Food Security (FANRR-25)***

This report describes USDA's Children's Food Security Scale and presents statistics on the prevalence of hunger among children in U.S. households for 1995-99. Prevalence estimates, based on the CPS-FSS, are presented for the general population and subgroups by household structure, race and ethnicity, income, and rural/urban residence.





## ***Second Food Security Measurement and Research Conference (FANRR-11-1 and FANRR-11-2)***

This two volume set documents the Second Food Security Measurement and Research Conference held on February 23-24, 1999. Volume I contains abbreviated proceedings. Volume II contains research papers from conference participants.

## ***Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit (E-FAN-02-013)***

This report provides a toolkit of standardized measure for assessing community food security, including a general guide to community assessment and focused materials for examining six basic assessment components—general community characteristics, community food resources, household food security, food resource accessibility, food availability and affordability, and community food production resources.

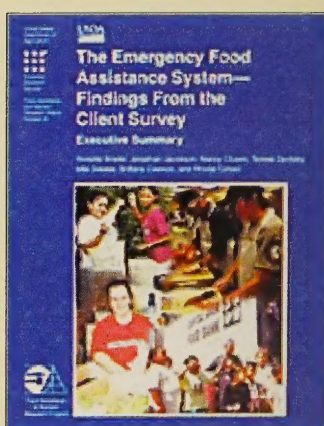
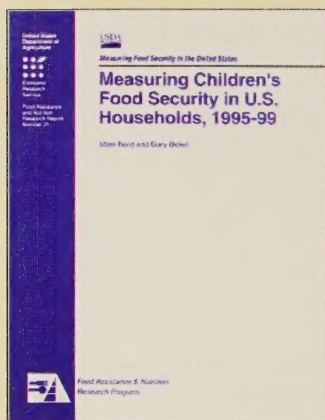
## ***Food Insecurity in Higher Income Households (E-FAN-02-016)***

Twenty percent of U.S. households classified as food insecure by the 1995-97 CPS-FSS had midrange or high incomes. This study investigates the extent to which these households may have been incorrectly identified because of measurement problems. Results show a small proportion misunderstood questions or gave erratic responses.

### ***Food Insecurity Measurement Review***

The National Research Council's Committee on National Statistics has been asked by USDA to perform an extensive review of the data collection, methodology, and reporting of statistics on food security and hunger. A preliminary assessment from the independent expert panel performing the review found that current measures of food insecurity and hunger, and how they are used to examine food assistance programs, may need to be refined. Specific recommendations for needed revisions will be provided in a forthcoming final report. The interim report—*Measuring Food Insecurity and Hunger: Phase 1 Report*—can be downloaded from the National Academies Press website.





## **Food Security-Related Research**

### ***State-Level Predictors of Food Insecurity and Hunger Among Households With Children (CCR-13)***

This report examines interstate variation in household food security and identifies several important contextual dimensions: the availability and accessibility of Federal nutrition assistance programs, policies affecting economic well-being of low-income families, and States' economic and social characteristics. Using hierarchical modeling, almost all of the observed interstate differences are explained by cross-State differences in demographic and contextual characteristics.

### ***Persistence and Change in the Food Security of Families With Children, 1997-99 (EFAN-04-001)***

Using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, this study shows that the food security status for individual families changes substantially from year to year. About half of families that were food insecure in 1997 became food secure by 1999, with the rest remaining food insecure. Likewise, about 7 percent of food-secure families in 1997 became food insecure in 1999. Overall, the prevalence of food insecurity was relatively stable in both years, with about 1 family in 10 being food insecure.

**Online access for food security . . .**

- analysis and trends
- household survey tools
- data and documentation

**[www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity](http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/foodsecurity)**





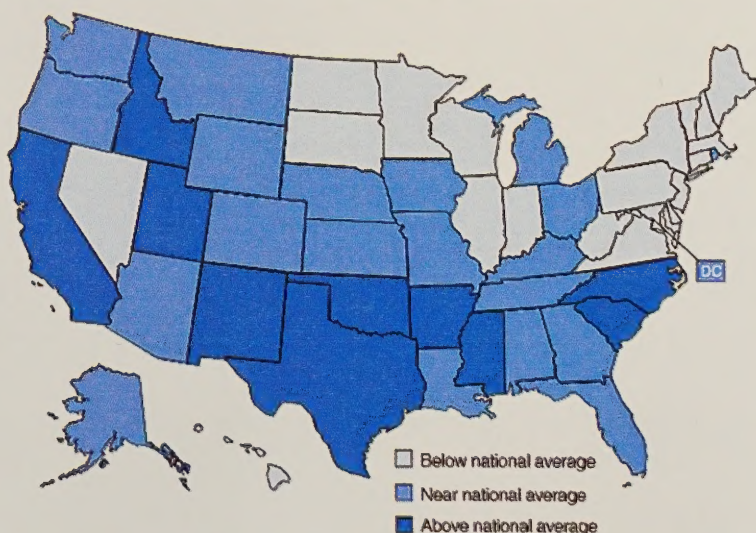
## ***Dynamics of Poverty and Food Sufficiency (FANRR-36)***

Using longitudinal data from the 1993 panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and the followup Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), this study characterizes the incidence and dynamics of poverty and food problems for the U.S. population and different subgroups.

## ***The Emergency Food Assistance System: Provider and Client Surveys (FANRR-16-1, FANRR-16-2, E-FAN-01-008, E-FAN-03-007)***

Findings of the first comprehensive government study of the Emergency Food Assistance System (EFAS) suggest that public and private food assistance may work in tandem to provide more comprehensive food assistance than either provides by itself. During a typical month in 2001, food pantries served about 12.5 million people, and emergency kitchens served about 1.1 million people. About 5,300 emergency kitchens provided more than 173 million meals a year, and 32,700 food pantries distribute about 2.9 billion pounds of food a year (roughly 2,200 million meals). Despite substantial amounts of food distributed by the system, the EFAS remains much smaller in scale than the Federal programs.

### **Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2002-2004**



Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.



## ***What does it mean to be food secure? Food insecure? Food insecure with hunger?***

Food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

**Food insecurity** is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

**Hunger** is the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food, [or] the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

*Definitions are from the American Institute of Nutrition, Life Sciences Research Office.*

**Hunger, as measured in the U.S. food security survey**, refers only to involuntary hunger that results from not being able to afford enough food. People are not counted as “hungry” for these statistics if they were hungry only because they were dieting to lose weight, fasting for religious reasons, or just too busy to eat.

The Economic Research Service (ERS) is the main source of economic information and research from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The mission of ERS is to inform and enhance public and private decisionmaking on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, natural resources, and rural development.

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